

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01

TRSE-00 /095 W

-----108925 202038Z /47/10

R 201420Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2888

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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USEEC AND USOECD ALSO FOR EMBASSIES

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y ONE PAGE OF TEXT OMITTED  
IN ORIGINAL TRANSMISSION

E.O. 11652 N.A.

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP

SUBJECT: UGT AND USO MERGER

1. SUMMARY. THE UGT-USO UNIFICATION CONGRESS OF DECEMBER

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18 OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVED MERGER, AND WITHOUT DOUBT  
STRENGTHENED THE UGT'S HAND ON THE EVE OF PLANT  
ELECTIONS, PERHAPS PROPELLING IT TO THE TOP SPOT AMONG  
SPANISH TRADE UNIONS. WARNING FLAGS ARE UP, HOWEVER,  
FOR USO'S KNOWN PROCLIVITY TO SUPPORT "UNITY OF ACTION"  
WITH THE SWC COULD CAUSE PROBLEMS WITHIN THE ENLARGED UGT.

2. SOME 600 DELEGATES (300 FROM EACH UNION) AND INVITED INTERNATIONAL GUESTS ATTENDED THE UGT-USO UNIFICATION CONGRESS HELD IN MADRID DECEMBER 18, 1977. THE MOTTO FOR THE CONGRESS WAS "SOCIALISM IS OUR UNION". THE CONGRESS WAS SOMETHING OF A FORMALITY INASMUCH AS BOTH UNIONS HAD EARLIER INDIVIDUALLY APPROVED THE MERGER: USO (PRO-MERGER ZUFIAUR BRANCH) IN ITS NOVEMBER 27 CONGRESS (MADRID 9420), AND THE UGT CONFEDERAL COMMITTEE SHORTLY THEREAFTER. UNIFICATION OF THE TWO SOCIALIST TRADE UNIONS (THE EXPANDED UNION WILL KEEP THE UGT NAME) WAS APPROVED OVERWHELMINGLY BY THE UNIFICATION CONGRESS: NO NEGATIVE VOTES AND 4 ABSTENTIONS. PRESENT FOR THE OCCASION WERE ICFTU ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL JOHN VANDERVAKEN, ETUC ASSISTANT SEC GEN SVEN STERNER, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE IMF (CARLOS PARDO), IUF, PTTI (BENITO ALONSO), THE SCANDINAVIAN LO UNIONS (JAN OLSON), THE 3 ITALIAN UNIONS (FRANCESCO OTRAGO), AND THE FRENCH CFDT (A 4-MAN DELEGATION). THE BRITISH, WEST GERMAN, FRENCH AND U.S. LABATTS WERE ALSO INVITED, ALTHOUGH ONLY THE LATTER TWO WERE ABLE TO ATTEND. REPRESENTATIVES FROM SO-CALLED "OPPOSITION LABOR ORGANIZATIONS" IN ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, AND CHILE RECEIVED A TUMULTUOUS WELCOME, WITH THE DELEGATES BREAKING INTO THE CHANT "ASESINO PINOCHET" (PINOCHET MURDERER) WHEN THE CHILEAN WAS INTRODUCED. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PRINCIPAL ADDRESSES ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW.

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3. USO SEC GEN JOSE MARIA ZUFIAUR, PRONOUNCING THE INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST USO'S SWAN SONG, REMINDED THE AUDIENCE THAT THIS MERGER HAD ONLY BEEN ACHIEVED AFTER EARLIER ATTEMPTS IN 1968 AND 1973 FAILED. USO'S CLOSE TO 20 YEARS OF HISTORY (IT WAS FOUNDED IN 1959) WOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN, AND ITS OBJECTIVES WOULD LIVE ON AND SERVE TO STRENGTHEN UNITY. "WE ARE DIFFERENT" FROM THE UGT, BUT THESE DIFFERENCES ARE IN THE DEMOCRATIC TRADITION AND AGAIN, WILL STRENGTHEN US. USO IS THE FIRST TRADE UNION SINCE THE CIVIL WAR TO LOSE ITS IDENTITY IN THE NAME OF "LABOR UNITY", BUT "OUR PRINCIPLES WILL NOT BE LOST". DECLARING THAT THEY WERE NOT "ANTI-PARTY" (A REFERENCE TO USO'S TRADITIONAL INSISTENCE THAT TRADE UNIONS SHOULD HAVE COMPLETE AUTONOMY WITH RESPECT TO POLITICAL PARTIES), ZUFIAUR DECLARED THAT THEY FAVORED "COOPERATION" BETWEEN TRADE UNION SOCIALISM AND POLITICAL SOCIALISM (I.E. THE PSOE), WHILE MAINTAINING FULL INDEPENDENCE IN LABOR MATTERS. TURNING TO THE COMING PLANT ELECTIONS IN HIS LAST REMARKS, THE USO LEADER SAID IT WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH TO JUST PARTICIPATE, AS IN THE OLYMPICS - "WE MUST WIN"

4. UGT SEC GEN NICOLAS REDONDO NOTED THAT THIS WAS NOT AN "IMPROVISED" MERGER, BUT ONE WORKED OUT CAREFULLY OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS. THREE MAIN PRINCIPLES BEHIND UNIFICATION WERE A) TRADE UNION AUTONOMY FROM THE STATE, EMPLOYERS, CHURCHES, AND POLITICAL PARTIES (WHICH WOULD NOT PREVENT "COOPERATION WITH THE SOCIALISTS"), B) DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURE ("A VALUED THOUGH AT TIMES DIFFICULT ROAD"), AND C) CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS. REDONDO WENT ON TO DECLARE THAT INTERNAL DEMOCRACY MUST ALSO SIGNIFY DISCIPLINE AND EFFICIENCY. THE UGT WAS "REASONABLY OPTIMISTIC" ABOUT THE COMING PLANT ELECTIONS, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF CERTAIN POLL RESULTS BUT BECAUSE OF THE UNIFICATION.

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5. INTERVENTIONS BY UGT AND USO DELEGATES FROM THE

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FLOOR WERE ALL HARMONIOUS AND IN SUPPORT OF UNIFICATION, SEVERAL OF THESE SPEAKERS CHARGED THAT "THE GOVERNMENT AND UCD" HAD TRIED THEIR BEST TO TORPEDO UGT-USO UNITY IN AN EFFORT TO CURTAIL SOCIALIST TRADE UNION STRENGTH AND PROMOTE "YELLOW UNIONISM". THERE WERE ALSO CALLS FOR FOLLOW-UP "UNITY OF ACTION", "UNITY OF THE LEFT",  
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AND EVENTUAL "ORGANIC LABOR UNITY", FROM SOME USO DELEGATES.

6. ICFTU'S VANDERVAKEN PLEDGED THE SUPPORT OF THE "56 MILLION-MEMBER ICFTU" FOR THE NEWLY UNIFIED UGT. HE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH IT WAS NOT YET KNOWN WHERE THE ICFTU'S 10TH CONGRESS IN 1979 WAS TO BE HELD, "MADRID IS A NICE PLACE\*", AND THE UGT WOULD BE "A MAIN ELEMENT" OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION. ETUC'S STERNER ALSO WELCOMED THE GREATER UNITY OF SPANISH WORKERS ON BEHALF OF HIS GROUP'S "39 MILLION MEMBERS". HE WARNED THAT SPANISH LABOR MUST REMAIN VIGILANT FOR "NO GIFTS WILL BE GIVEN US", ESPECIALLY DURING THE PRESENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES.

7. AS PLEDGED DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS, REDONDO RESIGNED HIS PLACE ON THE PSOE (SOCIALIST PARTY) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, WHILE ANOTHER PSOE EXECUTIVE MEMBER CHOSE TO RESIGN FROM THE UGT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EDUARDO LOPEZ). THE 15-MAN UGT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WAS FURTHER MODIFIED TO ALLOW THE ENTRANCE OF ZUFIAUR (AS SECRETARY FOR RELATIONS WITH OTHER FORCES) AND TWO OF HIS USO COLLEAGUES (FERNANDO SOLANO AND AQUILINO ZAPATA).

8. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THE CLAIM THAT UGT-USO UNIFICATION HAS BROUGHT UGT MEMBERSHIP "CLOSE TO TWO MILLION" IS LIKELY EXAGGERATED, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THIS TIMELY MERGER HAS STRENGTHENED UGT'S HAND ON THE EVE OF PLANT ELECTIONS AND MAY WELL HAVE PROPELLED IT TO THE TOP SPOT AMONG SPANISH TRADE UNIONS. IT IS STILL UNCLEAR HOW MANY OF THE ESTIMATED 200,000 USO MEMBERS WILL ACTUALLY FOLLOW ZUFIAUR IN-

TO THE UGT, AND ZAGUIRRE'S ANTI-MERGER GROUP WILL  
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CONTINUE TO BE A THORN IN THE SIDE OF THE SOCIALIST  
UNION - PARTICULARLY IF IT IS ALLOWED TO RETAIN THE USE  
OF THE USO NAME.

9. THE UNIFICATION CAN BE EXPECTED TO APPEAL TO THOSE  
LABOR ELEMENTS PUSHING FOR "LABOR UNITY", AND THE  
"UNITARY" CSUC (PTE, MAOIST) HAS ALREADY INFORMALLY  
INDICATED SOME INTEREST IN ENTERING THE UGT. USO'S  
KNOWN PROCLIVITY TO SUPPORT "UNITY OF ACTION" WITH THE  
SWC COULD CAUSE PROBLEMS WITHIN THE ENLARGED UGT, HOW-  
EVER, AND THE FIRST WARNING FLAGS WERE EVIDENT AT THE  
CONGRESS AS A NUMBER OF USO DELEGATES SPOKE OF "UNITY  
OF ACTION". AS A MATTER OF FACT, ONE USO SPOKESMAN  
DECLARED FLATLY THAT USO HAD NOT MERGED WITH UGT IN  
ORDER TO CONSOLIDATE TRADE UNION PLURALISM IN SPAIN -  
"WE WANT LABOR UNITY". BE THAT AS IT MAY, THE MERGER IS  
A BASICALLY POSITIVE EVENT WHICH WILL BRING MANY  
EXPERIENCED AND SORELY-NEEDED USO MILITANTS INTO UGT.  
OBSERVERS ALSO PREDICT THAT THE UNIFICATION WILL CAUSE  
A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF WORKERS TO OPT FOR THE UGT,  
TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE SWC. STABLER

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## Message Attributes

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